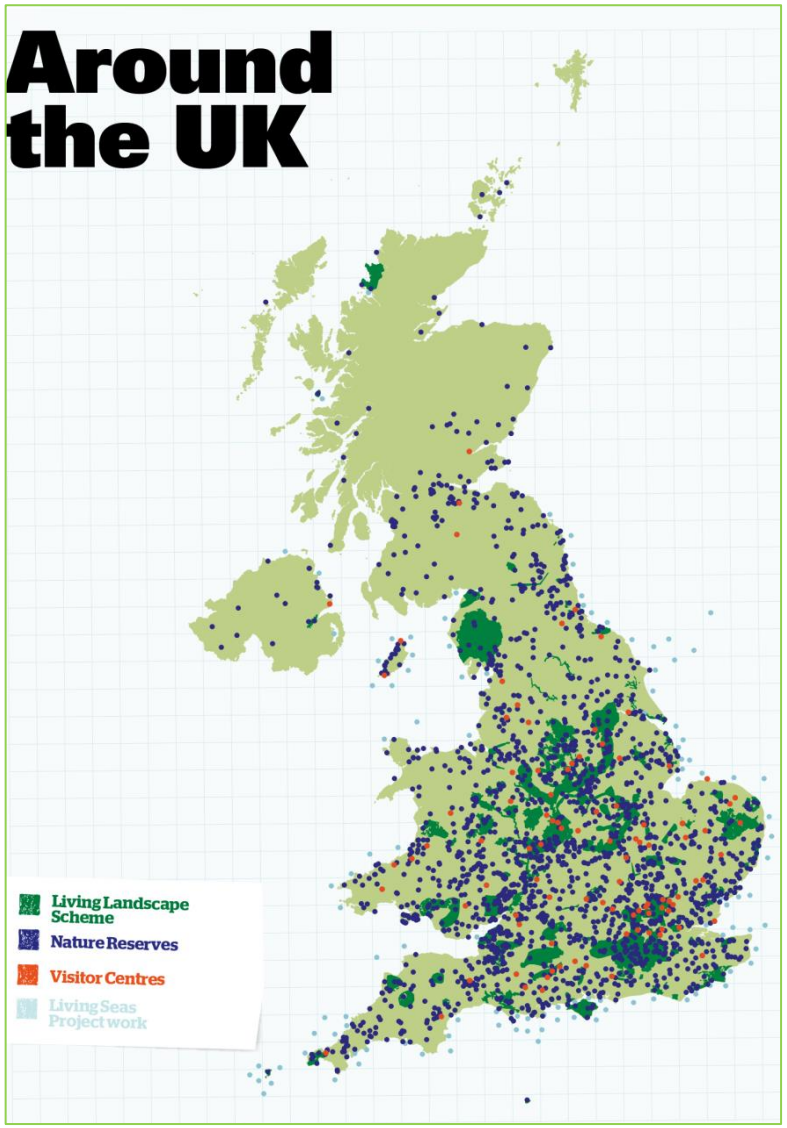
BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN FROM A WILDLIFE TRUST PERSPECTIVE

DR. RACHEL GILES

EVIDENCE AND PLANNING MANAGER

CHESHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST



Land and sea

- 2,300 nature reserves managed
- 150 coastal and marine reserves
- Over 120 Living Landscape schemes

People Power

- More than 850,000 members
- More than 38,000 volunteers
- Around 17,000 events held each year
- 6,500,000 visits to reserves

Influence

- Approximately 5,300 landowners advised each year
- Over 600 MPs and Assemblies engaged each year
- Over 57,000 Planning applications reviewed and 6,000 commented on

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WILDLIFE TRUST INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING

- Non-statutory consultee
- In several LPAs WTs are contracted under Service Level Agreements to provide planning advice
- Review over 57,000 planning applications each year
- Comment on 6000 planning applications each year

OVERVIEW OF TALK

- Background
- Work with Local Authorities
- Consultations/Screening applications
- Engaging in casework (issues)
- Work as off-site habitat provider
- Use of the metric

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BACKGROUND

Convention on Biological Diversity

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020

and the Aichi Targets

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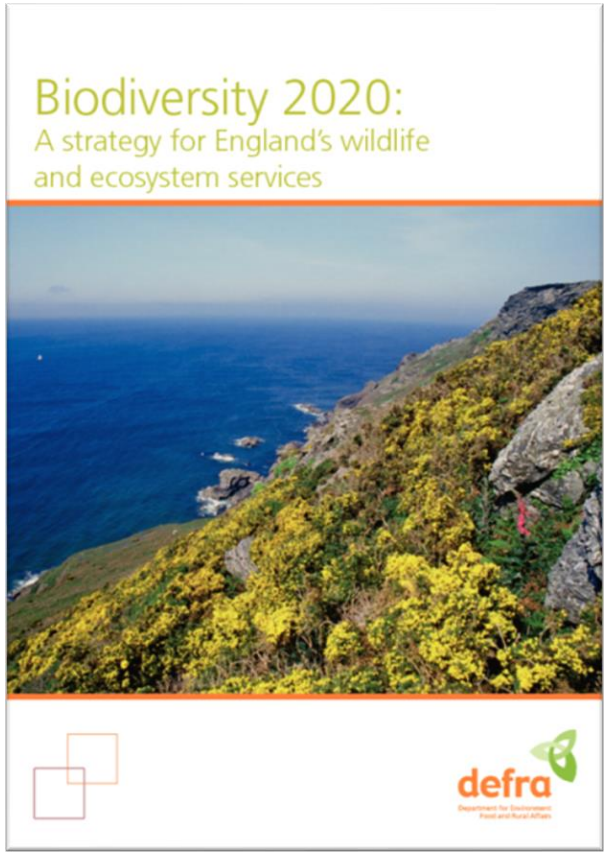
BIODIVERSITY 2020



2020 Mission

- *To halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.*

Outcome 1B

More, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with ***no net loss of priority habitat*** *and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats by at least 200,000 ha.*

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NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2012

PARAGRAPH 109

- *"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and* ***providing net gains in biodiversity where possible,*** *contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity"*

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National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Paragraph 109

- *"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity"*

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Paragraph 174 b

- *"promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and* ***pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity****"*

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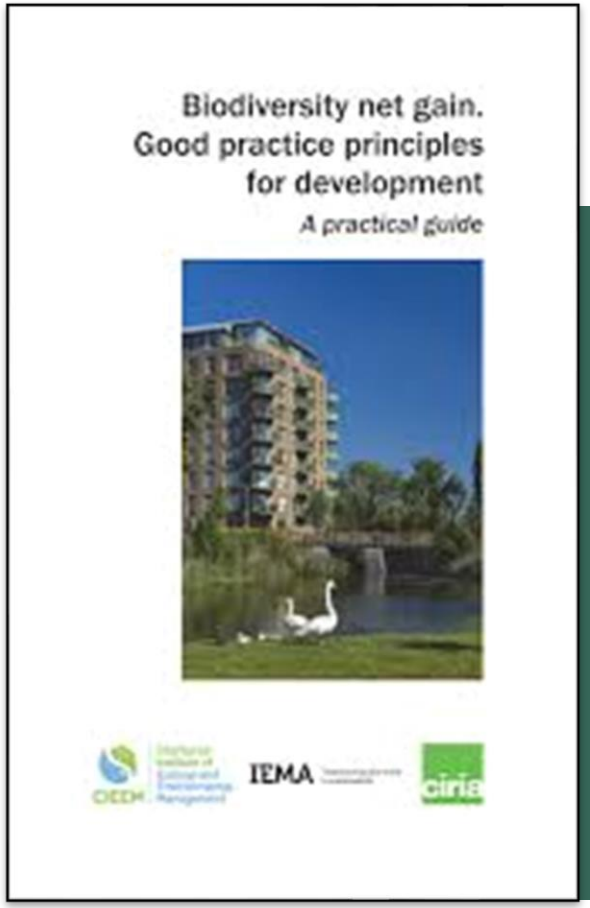
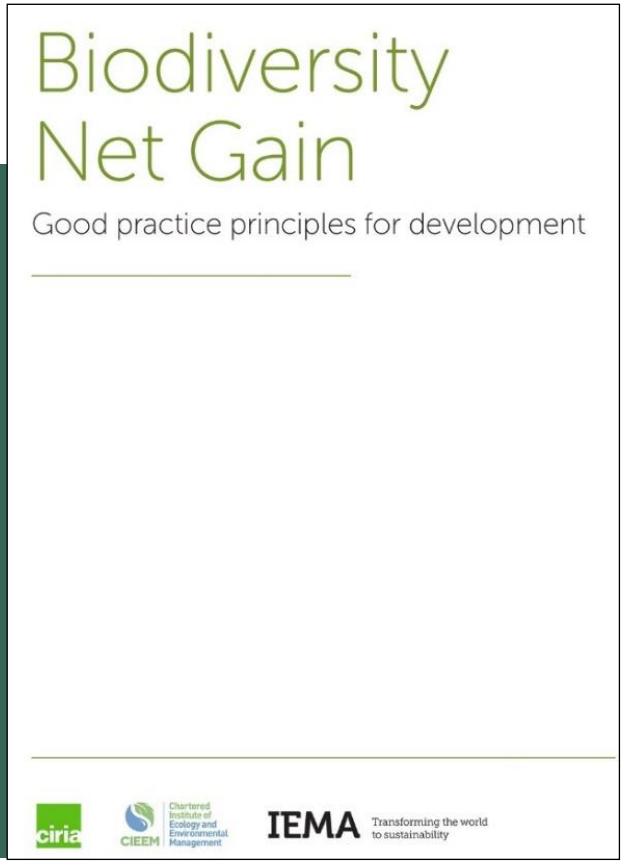
Biodiversity Net Gain

"development that leaves biodiversity in a ***better state than before****."*





"Urbanisation accounted for a greater impact on species than any other habitat conversion."

"it also acts to fragment landscapes by creating barriers between habitats"

State of Nature Report 2019

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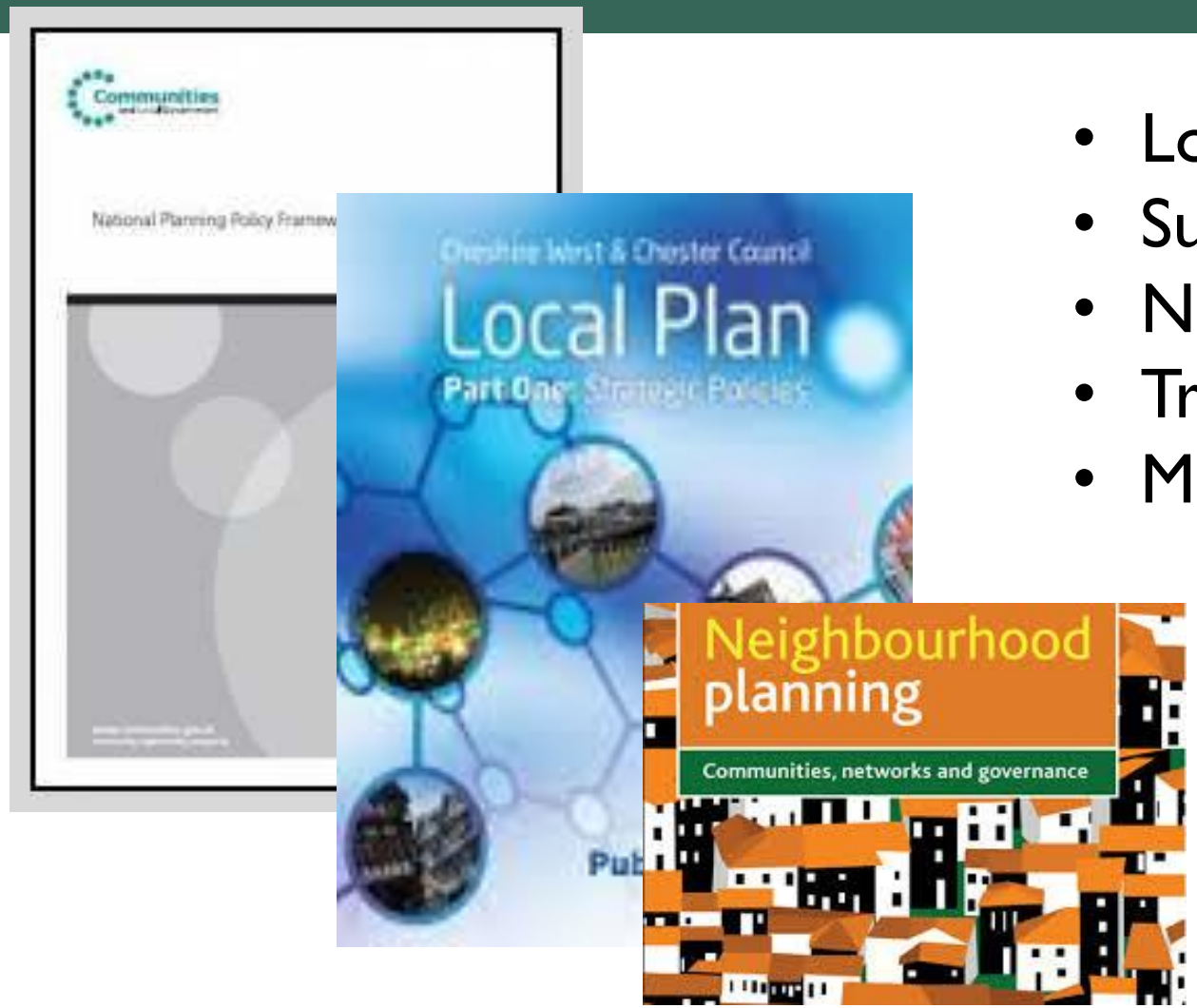
WILDLIFE TRUSTS WORKING WITH LPAs



- Local Policies
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Neighbourhood Planning Policies
- Training
- Metric checking service

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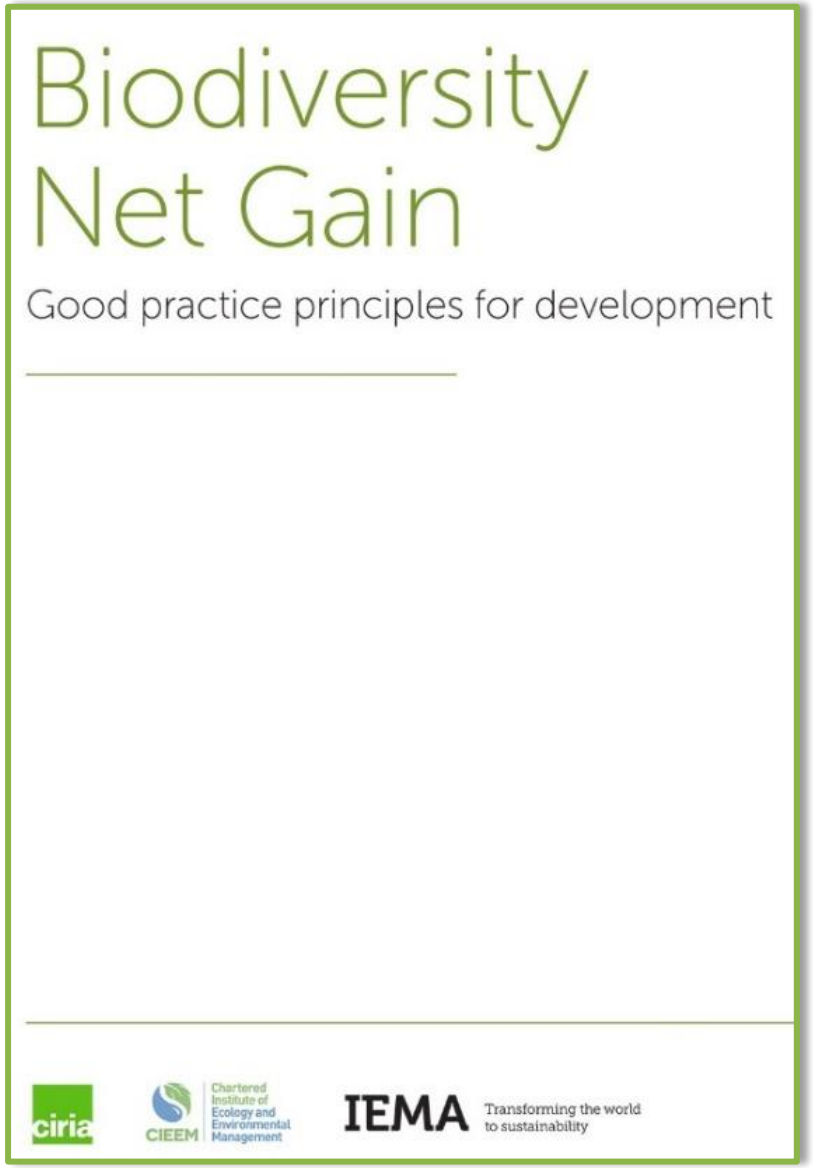
CAMBOURNE

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cheshire



BNG GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1 - Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy.

Principle 2 - Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere.

Principle 3 - Be inclusive and equitable.

Principle 4 - Address risks.

Principle 5 - Make a measurable Net Gain contribution.

Principle 6 - Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.

Principle 7 - Be additional.

Principle 8 - Create a Net Gain legacy.

Principle 9 - Optimise sustainability.

Principle 10 - Be transparent

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BNG IS ABOUT ADHERING TO GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES AND MEASURING OUTCOMES

Supporting information must evidence the Good Practice Principles have been applied

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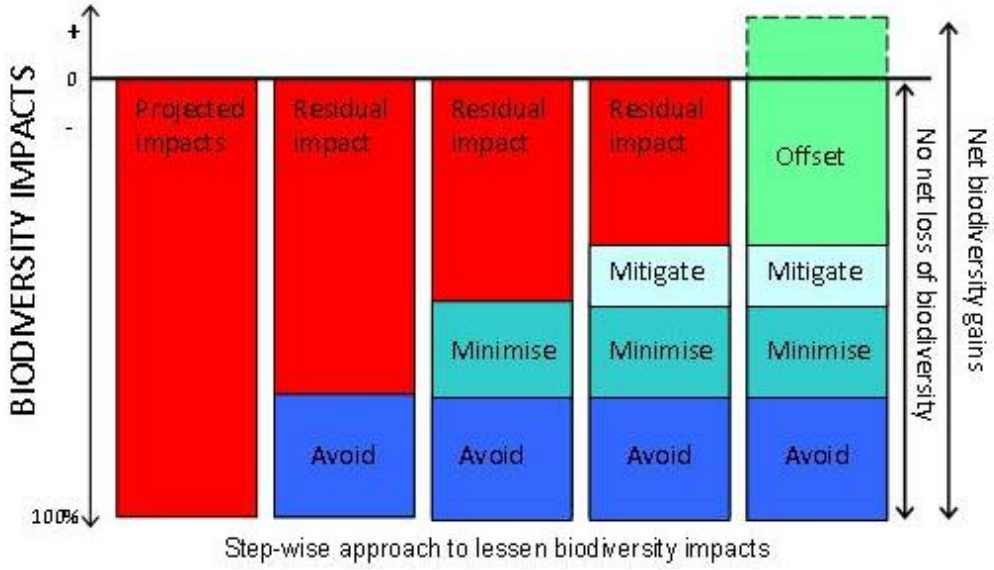
PRINCIPLE 1.
APPLY THE MITIGATION HIERARCHY



The Mitigation Hierarchy underpins BNG

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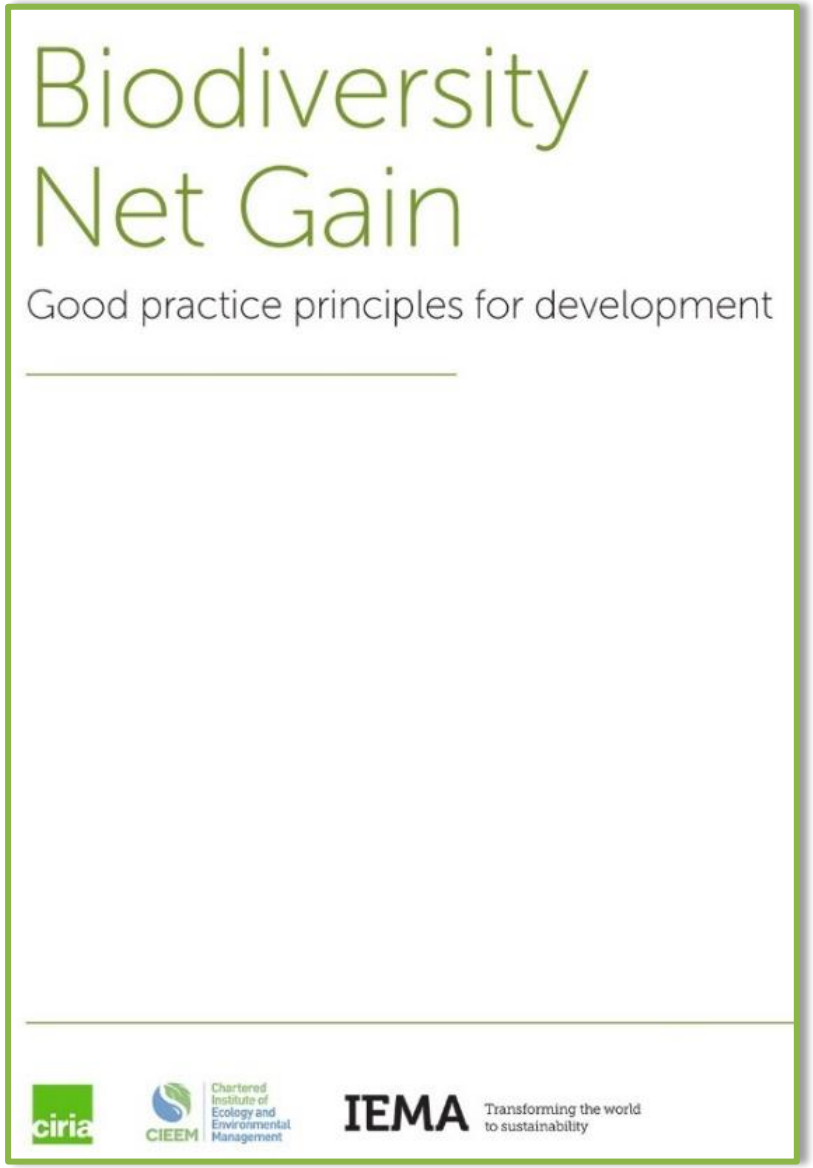

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PRINCIPLE 5.
MAKE A MEASURABLE NET GAIN CONTRIBUTION

No significant impacts?

- **All habitats now valued together with the suite of species they support**

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SPECIFIC PROJECTS

- A **good** BNG scheme will help the planning process

- A **bad** BNG scheme may delay the planning process

- **No Net Loss** for the habitats assessment is 95-104% (BREEAM Ecological calculator)

BNG APPROACH SHOULD NOT REPLACE GOOD GI STRATEGIES AND GOOD HOUSING DESIGN

- Delivering essential life-support systems (improving air quality, reducing surface water flooding);
- shaping the character/quality of places;
- contributing to mental and physical well-being;
- playing a crucial role in underpinning our economy (products and services and the value it adds to domestic and business developments);
- biodiversity

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PRINCIPLE 6.
ACHIEVE THE BEST OUTCOMES FOR BIODIVERSITY

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BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN MUST RESULT IN A **GENUINE GAIN FOR NATURE**

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ACHIEVING THE BEST OUTCOMES FOR BIODIVERSITY MEANS PROVIDING FOR **IMPACTED SPECIES** AS WELL AS **HABITATS**

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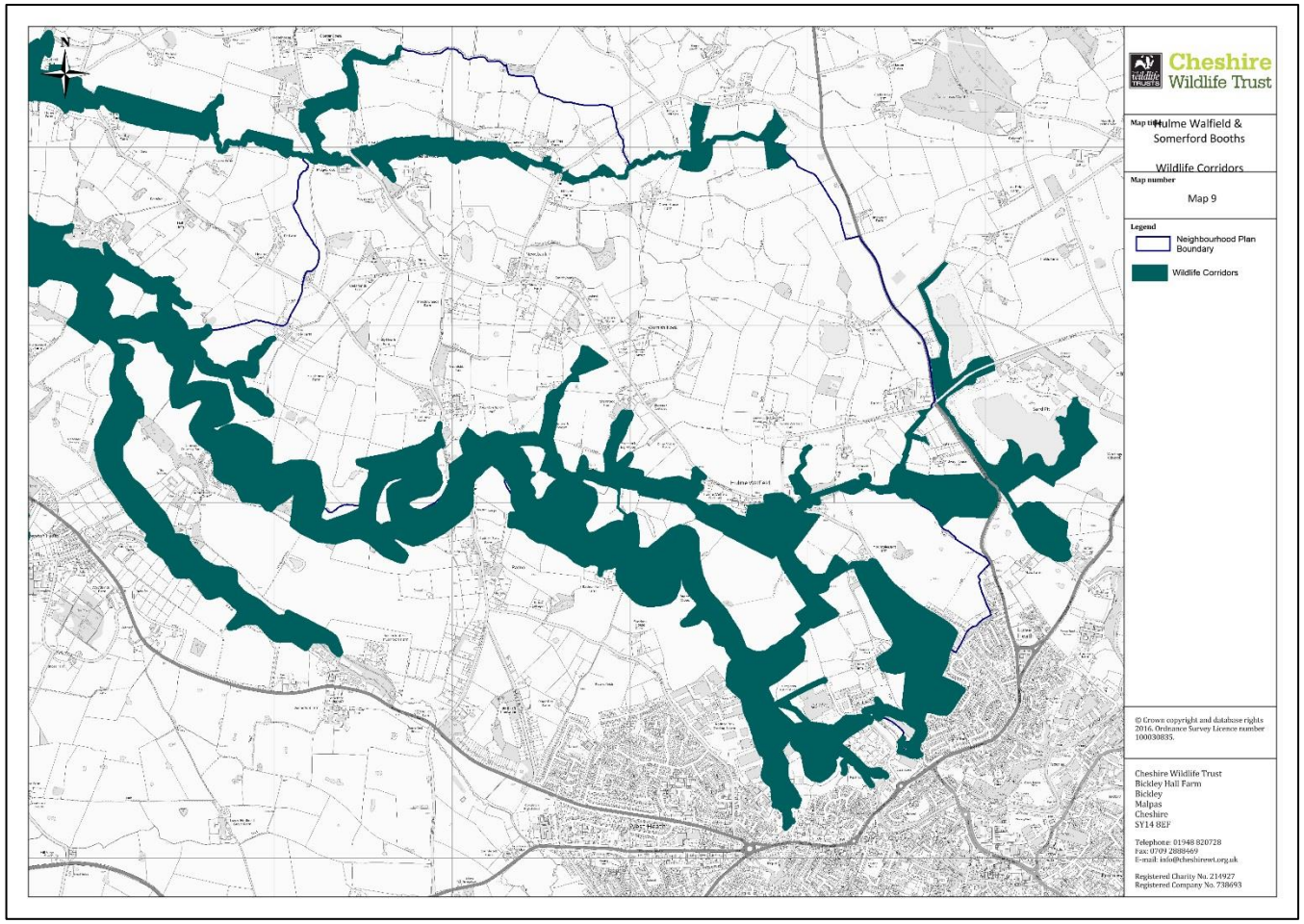

BEING STRATEGIC –

CONSIDERATION OF HABITAT CONNECTIVITY AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

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PRINCIPLE 7.
BE ADDITIONAL

BNG money should not be used to fund management of sites that would or should happen anyway

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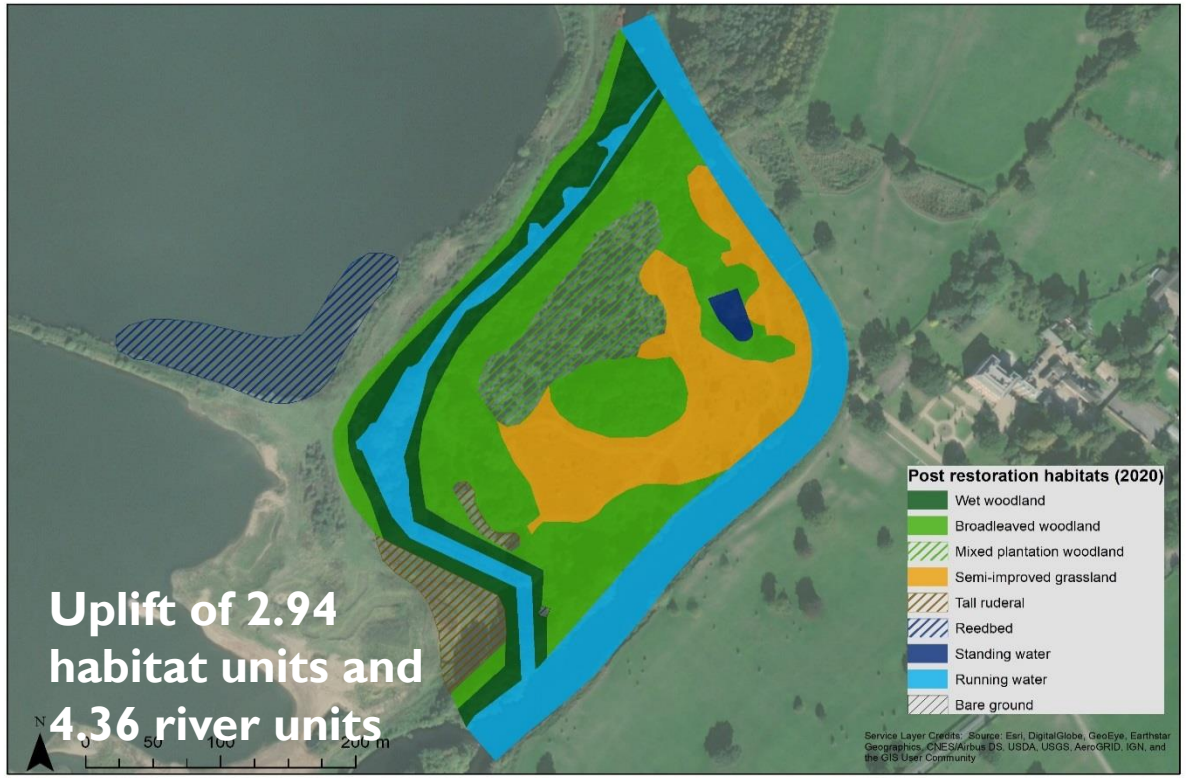
Cherry Holme River Project

Transforming the Trent Valley

Site pre-restoration



Site post-restoration

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

HERITAGE FUND

SIEMENS

	Calculator tool	BNG report
Size of development footprint.	√	
Is there any Priority Habitat on site?	√	
Has the mitigation hierarchy been followed?	√	
Are there additional protected/notable species surveys required due to the presence of certain habitats?	√	
Has biodiversity-rich GI been incorporated into the design?	√	
Can BNG be achieved onsite?	√	
Is there a commitment to long-term adaptive management?		√
Have the appropriate habitat surveys and condition assessments been undertaken at the correct time of year?		√

THE METRIC AND THE SUPPORTING REPORT PROVIDES EASILY ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

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PRINCIPLE 10.
BE TRANSPARENT

- Is there any undervaluation of baseline value of the site pre-development?
- Is there any overvaluation of the site post-development?

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Undervaluation of baseline?

- Are condition and distinctiveness values supported by evidence?
- Have hedgerow types been entered correctly?
- Do the areas and habitat types in metric match the maps?

Overvaluation post-development?

- Are the proposals for habitat creation ecologically justified?
- Are target condition and distinctiveness values justified?
- Management period matches time to condition.
- Has same methodology been used to assess offsite baseline?
- Is use of the word ‘fairly’ justified?
- Has ‘strategic significance’ been applied correctly

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Don’t use more than two decimal places…..

THANK YOU

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